

HOW WILL YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE? On April 22 each year, more than 192 countries around the world celebrate Earth Day. Popular activities include planting trees, collecting garbage and recycling goods while planning for a better environment and healthier planet.

GAZEBOEXPRESS



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • APRIL 2015

Out with the old ...



Refurbishing the Town Theatre began in mid-March when the seats were unbolted from the floor. Eight seats were salvaged and will be retrofitted and put on display. The rest had mold and were too badly damaged to be saved. [JOSH CARLASCIO PHOTO]

THEATRE DEMOLITION BEGINS

Since the Redevelopment Commission began tackling the early stages of the Town Theatre renovation with seat removal last month, Jim Kessler has become curator-in-residence of the relics inside the cavernous mid-century marvel.

From shields and suits of armor to long-lost tickets and scribbled notes about movie recommendations from theatre-goers during the 60-year-run of the movie house, the shuttered structure has been a treasure trove of artifacts.

"I didn't expect to be doing this but I am loving every minute of it," said Kessler, who is enjoying his second stint as a Redevelopment Commissioner. "The more we got into the idea of restoring the theatre, the more I knew I had to be there. It's one of the most fun projects I've done in a while."

From climbing through the rafters high above the screen to helping unbolt the old seats from the floor, Kessler has been working alongside

WHAT'S NEXT?

Next up on the Town Theatre renovation project is an in-depth look at the ceiling and joists. A cursory inspection was promising. Inspection by structural engineers over the next few months will determine whether the joists need to be replaced or if a new roof will suffice.

Ken Angotti, owner of Angotti Landscaping, and his crew to get the refurbishing started.

Along the way, he's getting to know the idiosyncrasies of the vintage structure and its former owners, the nooks and crannies the movie-going public never got to see.

"I found things I never knew existed like handwritten notes that detailed precise timing and instructions for changing reels for each film that was shown," Kessler said. "I'm looking through everything to see what can be salvaged. We want to have a display and also donate items to the Historical Society." 🌱

NO MAY PRIMARY

Lake County Election Board officials have approved a request from the town to cancel the May primary election.

The Election Board and town officials began discussing the possibility of canceling the primary after election filings closed in February without a contested primary race.

The decision will allow the Highland Town Council to save an estimated \$26,000 that would have been spent on election-related expenses.

CALLING ALL VETERANS!

Town Council President Mark Herak would like a member of the military — Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard or National Guard — to deliver the president's address during the Memorial Day remembrance.

"These brave individuals risked everything to protect our country — to protect us — and I would love to honor them on Memorial Day."

HOW TO APPLY: If you are a military veteran or enlisted soldier from Highland and would like to deliver the traditional Memorial Day address, please call Council President Mark Herak at (219) 838-0126 or email mherak@highland.in.gov.



... TOWN TICKER ...

Stop by the **Indoor Market** from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 11 at Lincoln Center Banquet Hall for your favorite breads, fresh local honey, cupcakes, pet treats and more. ... **Highland Police** will honor their fallen comrades at 9 a.m. May 9 during a public ceremony at Markley Park, 9501 Saric Court. ... **INFO:** Call Cpl. Erich Swisher at (219) 838-3184. ... **Highland Chamber's Pizza Palooza** is May 11 at Wicker Park Social Center. Doors open at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$20. ... Save the date! **Tour de Highland** kicks off at 11 a.m. May 30 at Wicker Park. Stay tuned for details!

2015 BEST OF HIGHLAND**Civil Servant Award Winners**

- 🌿 **Civil Servant:** Dawn Diamantopoulos, Highland Main Street
- 🌿 **Public Works:** Judy Vaughn
- 🌿 **Parks Department:** Katie Solina
- 🌿 **Public Safety:** Keith Thompson Sr., Volunteers in Police Services
- 🌿 **School Town:** Amanda Johnsen, Warren Elementary; Becky Rycerz, Merkley Elementary

Chamber Award Winners

- 🌿 **Chamber Volunteer:** Vickie Rust, First Midwest Bank
- 🌿 **Business Person:** Drs. Sarah & Joseph Paun, Paun Family Chiropractic and Wellness

Beautification Award Winners

Community Hospital, GFS Marketplace, Milestone Therapy, North Central Veterinary Emergency Center

Restaurant Award Winners

- 🌿 **People's Choice:** Town Club
- 🌿 **Critic's Choice:** Traditions

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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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COMMUNITY SHARES WISH LIST FOR HIGHLAND'S BRIGHT FUTURE

The Redevelopment Commission didn't have to ask twice to get residents to offer suggestions on making Highland even more livable.

About a dozen residents offered thoughtful written or in-person comments to a panel that included representatives from the Redevelopment Commission, Highland Main Street, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and municipal planners Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.

The meeting was held March 19 as part of a \$30,000 NIRPC Creating Livable Communities grant Highland received last year.

Story times for children at a local bookstore made the list as did suggestions for a micro-brewery to call Highland home and bicycle rentals along the pedestrian path that bisects the town. Residents also want:

- ✓ Greater access to Chicago through a transit system that stops in Highland or a trolley that will offer rides to the South Shore.
- ✓ An extension of pedestrian access to Munster with a new bridge over Hart Ditch at the confluence of the Cady Marsh.
- ✓ A boat launch at the Little Calumet River.

RETHINKING HIGHLAND

The Creating Livable Communities program was created to "... support community-based transportation/land-use projects that bring vitality to downtown areas, neighborhoods, station areas, commercial cores and transit corridors." Now that the input session is complete, a final concept will be created and sent to NIRPC, which will help fund initiatives through Northwest Indiana over time.

INFO: Email Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro at cpetro@highland.in.gov or call (219) 972-7598.



- ✓ Increased development at one – or all – of the I-80/94 exits that lead to town.

Seniors would like a center of their own while art enthusiasts want to capitalize on the promise of the town becoming a cultural hub for the region.

"We are grateful for the input," Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said. "We were surprised and pleased at the number and variety of suggestions we received to make Highland even better." 🌿

NEW MONITORING PROGRAM TESTS BACKFLOW DEVICES AROUND TOWN

The town is contracting with Backflow Solutions Inc. to manage 1,000 backflow devices in town and ensure they are in compliance.

Required for all in-ground lawn irrigation systems, as well as for many businesses, backflow devices are installed to prevent contaminants from entering the system and guarantee drinking water maintains its quality.

Mike Pipta, who oversees the backflow monitoring program as part of his work as facility supervisor in Public Works, said he will be working with BSI to guarantee the program is being managed in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Based in Worth,

Illinois, BSI manages backflow programs for municipalities around the country.

"This is the first time this has been contracted out," Pipta said. "BSI will send out annual notices along with a list of town-approved contractors who test the backflow assemblies. Individuals and businesses will be responsible for having their devices tested in a timely manner."

Water supplies without a backflow device are jeopardized every time there is a water main break, a fire is fought or the water lines become depressurized. Pipta said it is that lack of pressure that allows contaminants into a system that is not protected. 🌿

Highland's beautiful HERON ROOKERY

Despite the dodgy weather, Highland's great blue herons returned to the town rookery on schedule to shore up last year's nests for a bumper crop of nestlings.

It has been an annual rite of spring — the return of the great blues to their nesting grounds in the tall trees above the Little Calumet marsh — and an opportunity for residents to watch them as up close and personal as anyone should get to a nesting heron family.

In Highland's case, a pair of the majestic birds, which boast spindly long legs, a distinctive "S" crook in their necks and wingspans that can measure up to 72 inches, began nesting along the marsh more than 20 years ago.

Over time, generations of fully grown hatchlings along with new neighbors moved into the adjacent tall trees and a colony was born.

Over the last five years, the town has worked to develop an observation area along Liable Road, which provides ideal viewing of the life and times of Highland's blue herons.

Highland Main Street saw the opportunity to develop the attraction for tourists, as well as residents. Signs will be installed to guide visitors downtown to enjoy the restaurants, retail and commercial offerings. People will be able to bike or walk the loop from downtown to the levee to the Rookery and back.

Main Street volunteer Darlene Baron has become a caretaker, of sorts, for the herons, as well as a champion of the rookery observation area, which should be sporting new signs and other improvements yet this year.

"It is wonderful to see them return, year after year," she said. "They're incredible birds and we are lucky they decided to stop here."

IF YOU GO ...

Bring a pair of binoculars and head east along the Little Calumet River Levee Trail or the Erie Lakawanna Trail until you reach Liable Road to enjoy spectacular views of the region's birds, ducks, geese and water-loving mammals.

The Rookery is a partnership between Highland Main Street, Highland Redevelopment Commission, Highland Community Foundation, Highland Parks & Recreation and the Legacy Foundation, which provided a grant for signage, stationary binoculars, brochures and a bench.

INFO: For more information or to download a brochure, visit the Town of Highland website at highland.in.gov.



TREE REMOVAL

Tree Services

If you hire a contractor to remove your trees, make sure they are licensed with the town and that they will remove the trees they cut. The Town will not pick up branches or stumps left behind. Stumps must be ground to grade, covered with black dirt and seeded or sodded. Violators are subject to fines.

Emerald Ash Borer

The Emerald Ash Borer has taken its toll on Highland. All of the ash trees in the parkways have been inventoried and graded. Town crews are removing trees as time and weather permits. The Town contracts with a local service to remove larger trees. Please be patient. We will remove diseased trees as we are able.

INFO: For more information or to report broken branches that pose a threat to public safety, call (219) 972-5083.

LEAF & BRANCH PICKUP

Leaf collection

A crew will be picking up leftover leaves the first two weeks of April. Leaves should be raked into a pile or row in the parkway between the sidewalk and curb as close to the street as possible. Please make sure there are no vehicles blocking leaf piles at, or near, your residence.

Branch collection

Crews will be running daily routes to collect branches. Place branch piles — free of any other yard debris — in front of the property, not in alleys. Please note: small handfuls of branches can be disposed of in your weekly trash bin. Town equipment is designed for tree branches only. Heavier logs and debris will be picked up every Friday. Crews do not pick up landscaping timbers, railroad ties or fencing. Yard waste can be dumped at the town garage at no charge to residents. Anything other than yard waste must be taken to the town garage where residents must obtain a permit.

INFO: Call (219) 972-5083.

LIVING IN HIGHLAND

Living in Highland, a series of oil pastels created by Highland High School students, is on display in downtown businesses through April. Joanna Smith, coordinator of the art galleries as part of Highland Main Street, said the creative influence was Georgia O'Keefe. Check out highland.in.gov for a sampling or head downtown for the entire display.

CRAFT SHOW & VENDOR FAIR

The best in arts and crafts will be showcased at this annual spring show, featuring candles, jewelry, hand bags, home décor, skin care, gourmet dips and more.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 11**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

INFO: www.highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114.

POP WARNER REGISTRATION

Register your child for Highland Pop Warner football, cheer or dance. Must bring child's birth certificate, report and physical. A doctor will be on site to provide physicals for \$15.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 11**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEES: \$200 football, \$200 cheer and dance

INFO: Call Mark at (708) 516-4948 for football and call Norma at (773) 617-2306 for cheer/dance.

SWIM CLUB REGISTRATION

The Highland Hurricanes Swim Club, a competitive swim team for youth ages 5 through 18 in Highland and surrounding communities, is conducting registration for its 2015 spring/summer season, which begins April 20. Birth certificate required for registration. Please bring a swimsuit and towel for an in-water evaluation.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 11**,

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, **APRIL 15** and during the first week of practice from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, **APRIL 20-23**

WHERE: Highland High School Natatorium classroom, 41st and 5th streets. Enter through door "P" across from the softball field.

FEES: Varies depending on age and level.

INFO: Call (219) 595-9357 or visit www.highlandhurricanes.net.

ST. BALDRICK'S FUND-RAISER

In its third year, Highland's St. Baldrick's event continues to grow while raising money for childhood cancer research. This family-friendly event features games for the kids as well as music, food and raffles for the big kids!

WHEN: 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, **APRIL 19**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Social Center

INFO: To volunteer or become a sponsor or shavee, visit www.stbaldricks.org/events/mypage/9879/2015 or contact Christie Zumm at stbaldrickhighland@sbcglobal.net.

GARAGE & BAKE SALE

Hunt for gently-used gems and enjoy homemade treats at the annual spring garage and bake sale, hosted by the St. James Women's Guild. Clothes are \$2 a bag on Saturday!

WHEN: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, **APRIL 24** and

from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, **APRIL 25**

WHERE: St. James Hall, 9640 Kennedy Ave.

DONATION DROP-OFF: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesday, **APRIL 22** and Thursday, **APRIL 23**.

INFO: Please call Pat at (219) 922-1961 or Rosie at (219) 227-9383.

April 18

PARK PRIDE DAY ...

Join Highland Parks and Recreation for the 14th annual community park clean-up day from 9 a.m. to noon **APRIL 18**. Everyone is welcome, especially community groups and families. You will be assigned a park for clean-up. Bring gloves, rakes, and energy! Immediately after, meet us at Lincoln Community Center to receive your free T-shirt and enjoy a complimentary lunch.

INFO: Register you or your group at Lincoln Community Center or call Highland Parks & Recreation at (219) 838-0114.

May 12

SPRING CLEAN-UP ...

Republic Waste Services will schedule extra crews **MAY 12** to collect trash and rubbish generated by spring cleaning. Residents are encouraged to schedule their household spring cleaning chores and take advantage of the increased collection crews.

NOT INCLUDED: Construction debris, concrete, electronics, televisions, household hazardous waste and leaves. Televisions, computers and electronics may be recycled at the Highland Public Works Facility, 8001 Kennedy Ave.

INFO: Call (219) 972-5083.



Happy Earth Day!

This Earth Day – April 22 – show your support by planting a tree, walking or riding your bike instead of taking a car, reducing your consumption of non-recyclable goods and recycling where you can.

April 25

HAZARDOUS WASTE ...

To make your environment safer, recycle hazardous waste at a county collection site: batteries, cleaners, oils, paints, solvents, poisons, pesticides, antifreeze, gas, mercury thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent bulbs.

APRIL DROP-OFF SITE

Hammond Public Works

601 Conkey St.

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 25

INFO: Visit www.lcswmd.com for additional dates and locations.

Year-round

RECYCLING DRUGS ...

Turn over unused or expired meds instead of flushing or throwing them out. Police Department Coordinator Ken Balon says there is a risk that improperly disposed medications will get in the wrong hands or contaminate our drinking water.

For your convenience, the Highland Police Department is a drop-off site from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Department, 3333 Ridge Road.

INFO: Call (219) 838-3184.